

A variety of flowers, such as goldenrod, larkspur, columbine, wild roses and sunflowers, thrive throughout the state.

Before white settlers arrived in Nebraska, buffalo and beaver populations were significant. Today, buffalo are never seen outside game preserves. The beaver population, after being diminished by trappers, has become more plentiful in recent years. Other animals in Nebraska include white-tail and mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, antelope, bobcats, foxes, coyotes, badgers, squirrels, prairie dogs, muskrats, skunks, raccoons, rabbits and opossums.

Game birds, especially pheasants, grouse, ducks, geese and quail, are plentiful in Nebraska. The state's waters yield a variety of fish, including bass, carp, catfish, crappie, perch, pike, trout and walleye. The Platte River and lakes in the Sandhills serve as "rest stops" for many migratory birds, including the famous Sandhill cranes (see previous page).

Another migration rest stop of international significance is the Rainwater Basin district in south-central Nebraska. Within this district, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages more than 23,000 acres of wetlands and adjacent tall-grass prairie to provide habitat for migratory birds and resident wildlife.²³

ECONOMY²⁴

Agriculture

Nebraska's economy revolves around its agriculture industry. In 2014, 93 percent of the state's land — 45.6 million acres — was farm and ranch land.

Producers have utilized the state's fertile soil, abundant water and technological advances to produce record-high crop yields in recent years. In 2012, gross cash receipts from farm marketing totaled over \$24 billion, and Nebraska had 49,696 farms.

Crop Production²⁵

Nebraska is a national leader in crop production. In 2013, Nebraska led the nation in production of Great Northern beans, grown in the western one-third of the state, and in popcorn production. The state ranked second in pinto bean production; third in all dry edible bean, corn for grain and proso millet production; fifth in soybean production; seventh in grain sorghum production; and eighth in alfalfa hay production. Sugar beets and potatoes also play a significant role in the state's agricultural economy.

Nebraska's top cash crop is corn. Each year, more than 8 million acres of the state's land is planted in corn. The state's livestock, poultry and ethanol industries are the largest corn consumers.

²³ For more information about the Rainwater Basin Wetland Management District and national wildlife refuges in Nebraska, see Pages 145-147.

²⁴ Information for this section compiled from the following sources: Nebraska Department of Agriculture; Nebraska Department of Economic Development; Nebraska Department of Labor; Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce; Bureau of Business Research, University of Nebraska-Lincoln; *Fortune* magazine.

²⁵ See Page 466 for a complete set of Nebraska's rankings in agriculture production.

Products relating to agriculture, such as irrigation systems and farm equipment, are manufactured in the state. Agricultural businesses are an important part of Nebraska's economy, with one in three jobs in the state relating to the agricultural industry.

Livestock Production

Nebraska also is a leader in livestock production and livestock and poultry can be found on half of the state's farms. In 2012, Nebraska was fourth in cash receipts from all livestock and livestock products. In 2013, Nebraska ranked first nationally in commercial red meat production and commercial cattle slaughter; sixth in all hogs and pigs on farms; and seventh in commercial hog slaughter. In 2014, Nebraska was first in all cattle on feed and second in all cattle and calves.

Turkey, poultry, dairy, sheep and goat production add diversity and play an important role in the state's economy.



Cattle Ranching in Nebraska

Other Industries

Although agriculture dominates Nebraska’s economy, more of Nebraska’s income has come from other industries in recent years.

Manufacturing, which employed almost 96,000 workers in 2013, is a major employer among nonfarm industries, with most manufacturing sites located in the state’s large urban areas. Food processing is the leading type of manufacturing, followed by the manufacturing of machinery and fabricated metal products.

The service sector, which includes health services and business services, generates the most earnings in Nebraska. Government ranks second in earnings generated, while manufacturing is third.

The service sector also employs more workers than any other industry. Government jobs, many of which are in Lincoln, employ the second-highest number of workers. Wholesale and retail trades, taken together, employ the third-highest number of workers, with general merchandise stores being the largest employer among retail establishments in the state.

Lincoln is a major employer in education, led by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and other institutions of higher education. Omaha is a major center for food processing, healthcare, insurance, trade, transportation and telecommunications. Livestock and grain exchanges also are in Nebraska’s largest city.

Five Nebraska-based businesses are in the Fortune 500, *Fortune* magazine’s annual list of the largest industrial and service corporations in the United States based on revenue. These five are:

- Berkshire Hathaway, a diversified holding and investment firm
- Union Pacific, a railway network operating in the western two-thirds of the United States
- ConAgra, a food processing and marketing company
- Peter Kiewit Sons’, an engineering and construction firm
- Mutual of Omaha, an insurance and financial services company

These corporations have their headquarters in Omaha.

Fortune 500 Companies Based in Nebraska, 2014²⁶

Company	Headquarters	Fortune 500 Rank	Revenues
Berkshire Hathaway	Omaha	4	\$182,150,000,000
Union Pacific	Omaha	135	21,963,000,000
ConAgra	Omaha	184	15,491,000,000
Peter Kiewit Sons'	Omaha	236	11,826,000,000
Mutual of Omaha	Omaha	392	6,602,000,000

²⁶ Source: fortune.com, 2014.

Employment by Nonfarm Industries in Nebraska, 2013²⁷

Industry	Average Number of Employees
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	201,006
Education and Health Services	147,157
Professional and Business Services	108,879
Manufacturing	96,138
Leisure and Hospitality	85,213
Finance	71,602
Natural Resources, Mining and Construction	45,359
Other Services	37,231
Information	17,067
TOTAL PRIVATE OWNERSHIP	809,652
Local Government	110,823
State Government	41,413
Federal Government	16,480
TOTAL GOVERNMENT	168,716
TOTAL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INDUSTRY	978,368

²⁷Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Office of Labor Market Information, Current Employment Statistics, 2014.

Income and Earnings in Nebraska²⁸

	2011	2012	2013
INCOME ²⁹			
Total Personal Income	\$80,419	83,520	86,012
Nonfarm earnings	54,950	57,935	60,366
Farm earnings	6,196	5,242	5,479
EARNINGS BY INDUSTRY ³⁰			
Forestry, Fishing, and other	216	243	256
Mining	150	173	174
Utilities	626	675	633
Construction	3,608	3,941	4,337
Manufacturing	6,244	6,622	6,786
Durable	2,616	2,760	2,873
Nondurable	3,628	3,862	3,913
Wholesale Trade	2,847	3,059	3,218
Retail Trade	3,433	3,610	3,700
Transportation and Warehousing	4,085	4,143	4,308
Information	1,235	1,293	1,340
Finance and Insurance	4,078	4,292	4,524
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	3,648	3,931	3,906
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,623	1,815	2,355
Administrative and Waste Management Services	1,687	1,856	2,001
Health Care and Social Assistance	6,199	6,549	6,833
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	305	327	347
Accommodation and Food Services	1,277	1,387	1,436
Government and Government Enterprises	10,241	10,416	10,517
Federal, Civilian	1,456	1,481	1,459
Military	840	836	854
State and Local	7,943	8,097	8,203

²⁸Figures are in millions of dollars. Source: BEA Personal Income and Earnings by Industry, May 2014.

²⁹Farm earnings consist of proprietors' net farm income, wages of hired farm labor, pay-in-kind and officers' salaries of corporate farms.

³⁰Earnings are the sum of wages and salaries, other labor income and sole proprietors' income.



Union Pacific Railroad Cars in North Platte's Bailey Yard

PEOPLE³¹

In 1800, before Lewis and Clark traveled past Nebraska, several Native American tribes, mainly the Pawnee, Ponca, Omaha, Oto, Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho, lived in the area. The largest and most powerful tribe, the Pawnee, had about 6,000 members. In 1913, only 4,784 Indians of all tribes remained in Nebraska because others were moved to reservations in other states. About 16,100 Native Americans live in Nebraska today, with about 35 percent residing on the state's three reservations — the Santee Sioux, Omaha and Winnebago reservations, all in northeastern Nebraska. These reservations are supervised by the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The first Nebraska census in 1854 counted 2,732 residents. At the time, the area was a territory that included parts of present-day North Dakota, South Dakota, Colorado, Montana, Idaho and Wyoming. The 1870 census, taken after Nebraska achieved statehood in 1867, counted 122,993 people.

In the late 19th century, many European immigrants came to Nebraska seeking free land under the federal Homestead Act of 1862. By 1900, Germans accounted for 15 percent of the state's entire population. Other ethnic groups included the Swedes, Danes, Bohemians, German Russians, Poles, French, Irish, English and Italians. State-wide railroad construction spurred development of the communities where immigrants settled. Following the Civil War, black people migrated to Nebraska, and some of them tried homesteading. Most were lured to urban areas, where chances for finding work were better. The 1880 census showed a total of 2,385 black people living in the state. By 1900 that number had increased to 6,269. Omaha's black population doubled between 1910 and 1920.

³¹Information for this section compiled from the following sources: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce; "The Negro in Nebraska," Eldora Francis Hess, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of History, 1932; Nebraska State Historical Society; Nebraska Indian Commission; *The Nebraska Databook*, Nebraska Department of Economic Development; *Omaha World-Herald*.